find out ways and means to fight Naxalite problem, and he also said that the question of development was also discussed in that meeting. We attained freedom so many years ago but still in Andhra Pradesh, now, people are afraid of attacks from the landlords. Everybody knows it, all Members sitting here know it. The reason is that so far we have not been able to implement the land reforms, and the people have got a feeling that Naxalites will give some relief to the people from attacks by the landlords. Naxalites have been able to gain a sort of public sympathy because people are afraid of the atrocities committed by the landlords. At the same time, attacks by the landlords are also increasing in the villages of Andhra Pradesh. So, I would like to know whether in that meeting, the question of implementation of land reforms was also discussed which is a serious problem, along with the problem of Naxalites, in Andhra Pradesh particularly.

SHRI M. M. JACOB: I fully agree with the hon. Member that to expedite implementation of land reforms is a necessity, and in the Chief Ministers' conference I emphasised upon the State Governments to implement land reforms as scrupulously and meticulously as possible. In the States where land reforms are successfully implemented, you will find that there is less of this menace. I appreciate what he said. It is our attempt to see that land reforms are implemented as fast as possible.

Private Sector participation in Railways

*2. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:
KUMARI CHANDRIKA PREMJI KENIA:†

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal for enlisting participation by Private Sector in laying of Railway tracks; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and by when the proposal is likely to be given a concrete shape?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) and (b) The system of track laying for new lines, doublings and track renewal works through private sector by contracts is in existence on the Railways.

KUMARI CHANDRIKA PREMJI KENIA: Sir, I have asked a very specific question about the proposals received by the Government from the private sector for laying of railway tracks and I am really disappointed with the answer given by the hon. Minister. He has furnished incomplete information and I would request the hon. Chairman to have a look at the answer given by the hon. Minister. It states "...works through private sector by contracts is in existence on the Railways." I have asked for the specific information about how many proposals have been received by the Government and what are the details thereon. Sir, would you direct the hon. Minister to lay on the Table of the House the necessary information? Then I shall ask my questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: They have said that they are already taking up the operations through private contractors in laying railway lines. So far as the question is concerned, as it is worded the answer is written. You have been a Minister yourself.

KUMARI CHANDRIKA PREMJI KENIA: That is why I have been wanting a very specific answer from the hon. Minister about the proposals received by the Government from the private sector.

The Indian Railways have been very proudly proclaiming that they are the world's second largest and the Asia's largest railway network ssytem under one single mangement.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Kumari Chandrika Premji Kenia.

But its performance after independence has not been very spectacular. The statistics reveal that when compared to 53,596 km. route length in 1950-51, the growth has been only 16 per cent and on an average, it is 0.4 per cent per year. In the British times, the growth was to the extent of 1,000 Kms. As far as the Railway Budget of 1991-92 is concerned, a provision of only Rs. 249 crores has been made. And in the Konkan Railway Corporation, because of the resource crunch faced by the State Government and no budgetary allocation made in the present budget to the Corporation, there seems to be some delay in its execution. My first question to the hon. Minister is whether the Government will take steps to avoid the delays caused in implementing the Konkan Railway project and, if necessary, innovative measures will be adopted apart from the allocation made by the Corporation and various State Governments. Will you request the private sector to help in completing the Konkan railway network?

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: Sir, it has been very clearly revealed that private sector participation in laying the track is already existing.

MR. CHAIRAN: Are you going to promote private sector? That is what she wants to know.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: That is what I want to reveal to this August House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are going to reveal something.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: Already private sector participation is existing in laying the tracks. But regarding the hon. Member's question as to whether any proposals from the private sector have been received, the proposals have not been received, but when necessary, the contractors are taking up these things through tenders and so on for the track linking, for the screening of the ballast, for rail welding for materials handling and so on. As far as the Konkan Railway is concerned it is a Corporation which has taken up the challenge of completing the 800 odd km. track. The Corporation is taking adequate steps to expedite the construction and there is no question of any other private party participating in the activities of the Konkan Railway Corporation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Her question is in regard to financial participation by private parties. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: In the case of the Konkan Railway, the State Governments are also participating financially and also by issuing bonds. One may think that issuing of bonds to raise resources is private participation. But there is no private participation in the construction of the railway.

DR. BAPU KALDATE: What is the revelation?

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: The Minister has given an assurance that he is going to reveal something. (*Interruptions*)

KUMARI CHANDRIKA PREMJI KENIA: After the announcement of the liberalised industrial and trade policies, which is a very welcome step taken by the Government, I was told that many proposals have been received from the multinationals in regard to laying of railway track and other facilities. Will the hon. Minister throw some light on whether we have received any such proposals from the multinationals?

Secondly, there is a talk about throwing open the work of land development to the private sector. I read it in today's newspapers where the Minister has said that some land belonging to the Railways, situated in Bandra, in Mumbai, is going to be given to the private sector. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether we are really going in for land development by the private sector? As far as Mumbai is concerned,

there is not an inch of space available to the citizens of the metropolis. There is no open space available in Mumbai. I would urge upon the Government that as far as the metropolis of Mumbai is concerned, they should not encroach upon the open space available to the people there.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: Sir, the issue of land management is not connected with the question under consideration. Then, her information that the multinationals have sent proposals is totally wrong. The arrangement is that, whenever a new track is to be laid or some doubling work or conversion work or renewal of the track is to be undertaken, tenders are called for. The contractors will participate in that and, as per the tenders, works will be awarded to them.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Is there any proopsal to lay new lines for short distances to enable fast trains to be run? The present tracks cannot take fast trains. Is there any such proposal with the Railways like in other countries? For example, the TGB line.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: We do not have any such proposals. Whatever proposals we get, they will be cleared by the Planning Commission and they will be taken up.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: He is not making any revelation today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Have you seen 'yes, Minister', answering the question?

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Under the dictates of the International Monetary Fund, the Government is going to privatise the public sector. But Railways are a Government department. It is not in the public sector. The work of laying railway lines is done by the Railway themselves. He is talking about contractors and handing over to private parties. Are they going to privatise this Government department also? Has the Government such an idea in their mind? Are they going to privatise the entire Railways or part of it? They should clearly state on the floor of Parliament. There should not be any hide and seek about it. They should clearly state what part of it they are going to privatise.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: I have answered about the work given to contractors. However, we are not totally giving it to the private parties in regard to laying of railway track. Only, for example, track linking is up to 60 to 90 per cent, ballast screening up to 70 to 90 per cent, rail welding about 70 to 80 per cent, supply of ballast 100 per cent and the rest is also being done departmentally. This is because sepcial care has also to be taken by the Department in respect of the casual labour. This is an important fatcor and we will always be seeing that the casual labour, who will be on the roll are not retrenched. Therefore, departmentally also the work is being taken up.

SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, there seems to be some confusion between the Cabinet Minister and the State Minister. The Cabinet Minister has already announced that they are in favour of private sector to allow running of railways where there is no rail. Is there any thinking on the part of the Government to allow private sector to run the train where there is no railway facility?

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: Sir, here the Cabinet Minister has not answered the question. Therefore, there is no difference between the thinking of the Cabinet Minister and myself. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Had he answered the question, there would have been the difference.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: The Cabinet Minister gave a categorical statement.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: He is referring to the general statement of the Cabinet Minister, not relating to the laying of the track. So, I am not supposed to give any information in general. You asked specifically about the laying of the track.

SHRI T. R. BALU: Sir, there is a metre gauge line traffic from Madras to Tuticorin. Now, we have come to understand that the Railway Department has decided to remove the M.G. line from Madurai to Tuticorin. We have also come to know that the proposed change-over to broad gauge line from Madurai to Tuticorin is being privatised.

This proposed act of removing M.G. line by Railway Department has created a lot of hue and cry and the people of Tamil Nadu are agitating for non-removal of the M.G. line traffic. In this connection I would like to request the hon. Minister to state on the floor of the House whether he will maintain *status quo* and separate broad gauge line will be provided to connect the B.G. line left out from Madurai to Tuticorin.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is about privatisation.

SHRI T. R. BALU: People of Tamil Nadu are agitated over this. Hon. Minister should answer this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your supplementary does not arise out of this question. Next Question.

Deforestation/Poaching in the Western Ghats

*3. DR. BAPU KALDATE:†
SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the deforestation, shifting of cultivation and poaching in the Western Ghats threatening the flora and fauna besides causing severe depletion of the forests;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what measures have been taken by Government for preservation of wild life and for maintaining the ecological balance in the Western Ghats?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) The Western Ghats run through the States of Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamilnadu.

No case of any large scale deforestation has been reported, however, cases of smuggling of sandal-wood have come to the notice of the Central Government.

Sporadic cases of poaching of wild animals particularly elephants have been reported. Instances of sporadic cases of shifting cultivation in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala have been reported.

(c) Central Government have been assisting the State Governments through a number of centrally sponsored schemes for protection of forests and wildlife. Strict enforcement measures to regulate poaching have been taken.

The Central Government have also initiated an Integrated Action Oriented Research Development and Extension scheme related to ecology of the area.

डा० बापू कालदाते : सभापति महोदय, इस जवाब में मेरे एक प्रश्न का जवाब नहीं आया है और वह यह है कि आपने वननाशन की बात कही है लेकिन सवाल तो वनीकरण का है। आप जानते हैं कि महाराष्ट्र में हाइयेस्ट ग्वालिटी पर कोयला डैम्प है और इसकी सिल्टिंग का या सिट्टी

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Dr. Bapu Kaldate.